

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Reserve

aQH87

.3

.W4


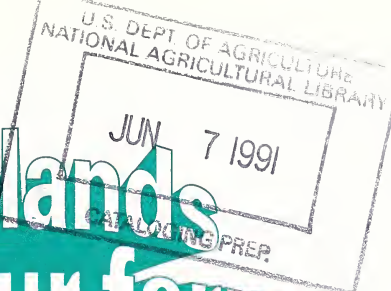
AD-33 Bookplate
(1-68)

NATIONAL

**A
G
R
I
C
U
L
T
U
R
A
L**



LIBRARY



wetlands on your farm



The swampbuster provision of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills is aimed at discouraging the conversion of wetlands for agricultural production. The 1985 Farm Bill required the Soil Conservation Service to make decisions on where wetlands exist and what type of wetland each one is.

Inside:

An explanation of how soil conservationists in Iowa are determining where wetlands are in Iowa and what each wetland determination means for landowners or operators.

USDA Soil Conservation Service
Des Moines, Iowa
January 1991

11 FEB 1991



NATIONAL



LIBRARY

Wetlands are important

More than half of the wetlands that existed when America was first settled are gone. Wetlands are some of our most diverse and productive habitat for fish and wildlife. But more important to production agriculture, wetlands help filter sediment, control floodwaters and recharge aquifers.

A wetland is an area of predominantly hydric soil which contains wetland hydrology and can support a prevalence of water-loving (hydrophytic) plants. Cattails, willow trees, sedges, rushes, some smartweeds, or other water-loving plants are often present.

Iowa SCS used a wetland inventory process to make determinations

① Inventories used to identify potential wetlands

Soil conservationists in Iowa formed six teams to inventory potential wetlands in the state. The teams first identified areas with hydric soil that can support hydrophytic vegetation or water-loving plants.

Using precipitation records the team selected 5 years of recent aerial photos from ASCS to identify areas that showed signs of drowned out crops, standing water, or set-aside at least two out of five years.

If an area had any of these three conditions and is hydric soil, the teams delineated the area on a map. They also marked areas on the photo that meet the criteria for wooded wetlands.

All land in Iowa has been inventoried and potential wetlands have been identified.

② Prior drainage records studied

After an area has been identified as a potential wetland, the next step is making a wetland determination and labelling each identified wetland based on drainage information in the SCS office and from the landowner.

Prior drainage is a big factor in wetlands determination. To make the most accurate determination, SCS needs landowners to provide additional information.

In most cases, landowners will be asked to fill out a drainage worksheet that gives the history of drainage on each site. The more documentation a landowner can provide on existing drainage including maps, sketches, and/or aerial photos, the more accurate a determination will be.

③ Conservationist makes determination

Based on the information about the potential wetland site, and on information from the landowner/operator, the SCS district conservationist decides if a wetland exists, and if so what type of wetland it is.

The decision, called a wetland determination, is important to landowners who participate in USDA programs. The determination may be appealed - local offices have appeal procedures.

Common "Swampbuster" terms

Listed below are some common terms that may be used to explain or to carry out the "Swampbuster" provisions of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills.

Swampbusting Planting a commodity crop in a wetland converted between December 23, 1985 and November 28, 1990 is swampbusting. After November 28, 1990, swampbusting is also the act of draining or altering any wetland--or increasing drainage on a farmed wetland.

Hydric soil Soils that are wet enough during the growing season to affect plant growth. Hydric soil classification is based on soil type, depth to seasonal high water table, ponding, and flooding.

Hydrophytic vegetation Plants that grow in a soil periodically deficient of oxygen, due to wetness.

Minimal effect A wetland exemption granted when the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland would have little impact on the hydrological and biological functions of the wetland or surrounding wetlands.

Abandoned wet areas Wetlands that were once altered and farmed. No attempt was made to use or maintain the area agriculturally for at least five successive years, and it now supports water-loving plants. These areas are treated as natural wetlands.

Wetland hydrology (criteria for wetlands) for ponded areas When water stands on the surface or there is a combination of standing water on the surface and soil is saturated within 18 inches of the soil surface for at least 7 consecutive days during the growing season.

for flooded areas When an area floods for 15 consecutive days approximately every other year.

AD-33 Bookplate
(1-68)

NATIONAL

A
G
R
I
C
U
L
T
U
R
A
L



LIBR.

Common "Swampbuster" terms

Listed below are some common terms that may be used to explain or to carry out the "Swampbuster" provisions of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills.

Swampbusting Planting a commodity crop in a wetland converted between December 23, 1985 and November 28, 1990 is swampbusting. After November 28, 1990, swampbusting is also the act of draining or altering any wetland--or increasing drainage on a farmed wetland.

Hydric soil Soils that are wet enough during the growing season to affect plant growth. Hydric soil classification is based on soil type, depth to seasonal high water table, ponding, and flooding.

Hydrophytic vegetation Plants that grow in a soil periodically deficient of oxygen, due to wetness.

Minimal effect A wetland exemption granted when the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland would have little impact on the hydrological and biological functions of the wetland or surrounding wetlands.

Abandoned wet areas Wetlands that were once altered and farmed. No attempt was made to use or maintain the area agriculturally for at least five successive years, and it now supports water-loving plants. These areas are treated as natural wetlands.

Wetland hydrology (criteria for wetlands) for ponded areas When water stands on the surface or there is a combination of standing water on the surface and soil is saturated within 18 inches of the soil surface for at least 7 consecutive days during the growing season.

for flooded areas When an area floods for 15 consecutive days approximately every other year.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY



1022281274

an

* NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY



1022281274